

DT-SPACE-26-BIZ-2020, Space hubs (support to start-ups)

Geospatial Scaleup Programme

Building the ecosystem to grow geospatial startups across verticals

The Knowledge Transfer Network, in partnership with the University of Leicester and Leicester Innovation Hub (LIH), would like to contribute to the implementation of a H2020 project under the [H2020-SPACE-2018-2020 Call](#), DT-SPACE-26-BIZ-2020 **Space hubs (support to start-ups)**.

As a partnership, we offer a range of **delivery mechanisms** that are already available in the two organisations for the set up of a Geospatial Scaleup Programme aimed at European startups with traction and a product to support product development, leadership development, access to corporate clients, growth and access to finance and funding.

The partnership includes both, **the physical hub** at the University of Leicester, holding the brand of a Copernicus Relay since establishment of Relays by the EU in 2017, and **a cross-sector network** of businesses and R&D organisations that have joined the KTN Geospatial Insights Special Interest Group (GeoSIG), launched in May 2019.

The University of Leicester and Leicester Innovation Hub offer extensive support to students, graduates and postgraduates who are thinking about starting up their own business. As a beneficiary in the H2020 *Copernicus Hub* project [CoRdiNet](#), the University delivers Copernicus raising awareness and training activities across EU. Leicester Innovation Hub ran a highly successful *Copernicus Hackathon*, co-funded by the EC Copernicus Programme, in Sept 2019, and is planning to organise another Hackathon in 2020. The Space Industries Accelerator, set up by LIH with the funding from the UK Space Agency in 2018, has a mission to identify and support aspiring entrepreneurs to develop and transform their ideas and innovations into ready to launch start-ups, which can be then taken on board of the GeoSIG and supported by the in-house expertise at the University of Leicester and the KTN. LIH already nurtured 11 pre-start-ups directly related to the space sector, and more than 15 businesses took part in the Accelerator programme by June 2019.

The Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) is an established innovation network, covering all sectors of economic importance. KTN is a not-for-profit **SME**, currently employing over 180 staff. For 15 years, KTN has helped thousands of businesses secure funding and/or find the best partners for advancing and deploying innovation, supporting them through their business cycle to see their investment into new products, processes or services turn into success. Focusing on business innovation as a core activity, KTN has in-depth experience of the financial landscapes, business model development, investor readiness, routes to market and market opportunities, and the creation of value networks and collaboration. The KTN GeoSIG already supported 10 geospatial start-ups to pitch in front of an investor audience in June 2019.

The Geospatial sector is now transitioning from a vertical industry to a horizontal enabler where the value of geospatial intelligence is captured across many industry verticals. Within this view, there is a need for establishing the right business ecosystem that supports geospatial start-ups and corporate entities to connect the dots in the “geospatial mesh” and realise the full potential of this technology in the verticals where it produces economic growth and societal impact. Access to corporate clients and funding to grow organically is a major issue to overcome for geospatial startups. This programme aims to support their growth.

The main aim of the proposed **Geospatial Scaleup Programme** is to scout the best geospatial entrepreneurs, teams and start-ups in Europe, provide selected teams with leadership training, support them with access to a network of corporates and/or investment opportunities, understand their positioning in the wider business ecosystem, work on data challenges provided by corporates and pitch for contracts and investment.

University of Leicester – Leicester Innovation Hub

<https://le.ac.uk/enterprise/development/innovation-hub>

Activities:

- ✓ Raising awareness workshops and webinars
- ✓ Pitching competitions for primes and investors
- ✓ Investment readiness training
- ✓ Hackathons
- ✓ Promotion of Copernicus and Galileo Masters
- ✓ Business Ignition and Ideation events
- ✓ Design Sprint
- ✓ Cross-sector networking events
- ✓ Start-up weekends
- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Providing hosting space and hot-desks
- ✓ Network with stakeholders and peers across Europe in industry events